



Foreword



I am pleased to present the *Tenth Special Report on Alcohol and Health* to the U.S. Congress, and through them to the American people.

Alcohol problems, both those of individuals and those that affect society at large, continue to impose a staggering burden on our Nation. Domestic violence, child abuse, fires and other accidents, falls, rape, and other crimes against individuals such as robbery and assault—all are linked to alcohol misuse. Alcohol misuse also is implicated in diseases such as cancer, liver disease, and heart disease. Although often not aware of it, everyone shares a portion of this burden. For example, an estimated 20 to 40 percent of patients in large urban hospitals are there because of illnesses that have been caused or made worse by their drinking. This means that out of every 100 patients in such hospitals, *almost half* may be there because of their alcohol use. Each of us shares the price of these illnesses through rising health care costs. Because one in four children under the age of 18 lives in a household with one or more family members who are alcohol dependent or who abuse alcohol, our Nation will continue to be robbed of its future. As these children grow up, they too will be at risk for continuing the cycle of alcohol abuse and dependence that has plagued too many of our citizens for too long.

As overwhelming as these facts are, the real tragedy is that many people do not yet understand that alcohol problems can yield to scientific investigation and medical intervention in the same way as other health conditions, and in many cases more successfully.

The research findings presented in the *Tenth Special Report to the U.S. Congress on Alcohol and Health* clearly demonstrate that continued support for alcohol research, and the use of findings from research in prevention and clinical applications, offer the best hope for reducing the costs we all pay for alcohol problems. I commend it to your attention.

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